



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10**

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OFFICE OF  
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

November 13, 2012

William W. Stelle, Jr., Regional Administrator  
NMFS Northwest Region  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
7600 Sandpoint Way NE  
Seattle, Washington 98115

Re: EPA comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for the 2013-2014 Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery and Amendment 21-2 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, EPA Project #12-0029-NOA.

Dear Mr. Stelle:

We have reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for the 2013-2014 Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery and Amendment 21-2 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (CEQ # 20120322) in accordance with our responsibilities under National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

On July 27, 2012, we provided comments on the Draft EIS for this project and assigned a rating of EC-2 (Environmental Concerns-Insufficient Information) to the EIS. We specifically recommended the consideration of a No Action alternative and expressed concerns related to the harvest levels under all alternatives, as well as adverse impacts to non-target species, such as leatherback turtles. We stated that harvest levels could extend the length of time it will take to reach rebuilding targets for both Pacific Ocean Perch and Canary Rockfish.

Based on our review of the Final EIS, and specifically Chapter 7 Response to Comments, we understand that Alternative 2 considered annual catch limits for canary rockfish and Pacific Ocean perch that are lower than the No Action (current management) alternative evaluated in the EIS. Thank you for this clarification. We also recognize that Section 4.1.4 has been revised to include additional discussion on impacts to sea turtles. Thank you for this additional information. As such, the EPA has no further concerns regarding this Final EIS.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on the Final EIS. Please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or by email at [reichgott.christine@epa.gov](mailto:reichgott.christine@epa.gov), or you may contact Jennifer Curtis of my staff in Anchorage at (907) 271-6324 or by email at [curtis.jennifer@epa.gov](mailto:curtis.jennifer@epa.gov) with any questions you have regarding our comments.

Sincerely,



Christine B. Reichgott, Manager

Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit